

Project Summary Sheet

Project Name: Bijou Creek Flood Control and Floodplain Restoration Project

Tracking No: 200784103

Location: South Lake Tahoe, CA **County:** El Dorado

Project Sponsor: City of South Lake Tahoe

Point of Contact: Sarah Hussong Johnson, (530) 542-6033,
E-mail: shussong-johnson@cityofslt.us

Co-applicant(s): None

Assembly District: #4 Ted Gaines

Senate District: #1 Dave Cox

Project Summary: The objective of the Bijou Creek Flood Control Project is to restore the northern portion of the Bijou Creek floodplain in the City of South Lake Tahoe. Restoration of the floodplain will provide proper conveyance of floodwater, reduction in the occurrence of overbank flow and flood damage, restore riparian habitat, and provide water quality treatment of stormwater before the runoff enters Lake Tahoe.

In the late 1950's Bijou Creek was placed in a storm drain running from Highway 50 to Lake Tahoe and the land paved over the pipe. This action represented a loss of flood conveyance capacity, flood storage, groundwater infiltration, wetland acreage, wildlife habitat, and water quality treatment. Piping of the creek removed a natural habitat that reduced the amount of sediment entering Lake Tahoe. Today, sediment from the commercial area overlying Bijou Creek directly enters the lake. Fine sediment is thought to be a contributor to the declining clarity of Lake Tahoe. Because of the initial undersizing of the culverts that now contain Bijou Creek, the commercial area in the former floodplain is subject to frequent flooding as floodwater overtops Highway 50 and flows through Bijou commercial center.

The Project is located in a developed area in the eastern portion of the City beginning at the northern end of Bijou Meadow south of Fairway Drive and extending north to Lake Tahoe. Bijou Meadow is an extensive meadow system that begins about one mile south of Fairway Drive at Pioneer Trail. The meadow receives runoff from the national forest land south of Pioneer Trail and the urban area to the east and west of the meadow. Flow through the meadow is dispersed and lacking a defined channel. The floodplain of the meadow is mapped pursuant to the National Flood Insurance Program and the limits of the 100-year flood are delineated.

Bijou Creek is channelized in a constructed channel starting approximately 200 feet south of Fairway Drive. A pipe conveys the creek under the Bijou Center parcel about 630-feet before discharging into Lake Tahoe, adjacent to the Lakeshore Lodge. Caltrans and the City Public Works Department have noted that much of the pipe under the Bijou Center parcel is failing and that the bottom of the pipe has rusted away. The

creek discharge on the beach is unsightly and of poor water quality (second worst constituent levels of any outfall within the Tahoe Basin (TRPA, Snap-shot day data).

The Project will restore and improve the channel from 300-feet upstream of Fairway Drive to Lake Tahoe. The culverts are proposed to be removed and replaced with open channel and properly-sized culverts and/or conspan structures. Culverts/conspans will be used at Fairway Drive and at Highway 50. Open channel sections will be present from Fairway Drive to Highway 50 and from Highway 50 to Lake Tahoe. The structure under Fairway Drive will be a Conspan® structure that is installed as part of this Project, and the culvert/conspan under Highway 50 will be installed by Caltrans as part of its water quality improvements.

Flood Benefits: The existing storm drainage system in a state of disrepair and is undersized to convey the design flow. The current system consists of underground culverts that can only convey approximately 10 cubic feet per second (cfs), with a design storm flow of 308 cfs (100 year storm event). The Project area for this grant contains about 16 acres of land in the 100-year floodplain. The project would reduce that to less than one acre.

Agricultural Benefits: N/A **Agricultural Land Conserved:** N/A

Wildlife Benefits: This project proposes to open up the historic stream channel to a similar state prior to development. This natural channel will provide not only flood control, but wildlife habitat in an area that no longer has any habitat. A wildlife corridor would exist from the lake to Bijou Meadow.

Wildlife Habitat Conserved: 3.1 acres

Total area conserved: 3.1 acres

Other Benefits: Water quality within the Tahoe Basin is an extremely important threshold goal of both the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) and the State of California Water Resources Control Board (Lahontan). Existing storm drainage from the commercial core, and Highway 50, drains directly to the lake, without treatment. The project proposes to minimize the impacts of this runoff by providing treatment (funding by others, not this DWR application) for this runoff prior to discharge to the lake. The proposed channel would also provide treatment.

Total Cost: \$70,000,000

FPCP Cost: \$1,088,500 for Planning and Design, and some right-of-way acquisition. The balance of the funding needed to achieve actual flood benefits has not yet been secured by the applicant.

Funding Partners and Share of Cost: Future local funds contribution is expected to be \$54,000,000.